GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
CULTURE
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:408
ANSWERED ON:03.05.2007
ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING IN ANTIQUITIES
Singh Shri Dushyant

Will the Minister of CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government is aware of the increasing illegal trafficking in antiquities in the country;

(b) if so, the number of cases reported during each of the last three years;

(c) the corrective steps being taken to combat antiquities trafficking;

(d) whether the National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities will be able to combat the antiquities trafficking; and

(e) if so, to what extent ?

Answer

MINISTER FOR CULTURE (SMT. AMBIKA SONI)

(a) to (e) A statement is laid OD the table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PART (a) TO (e) OF THE LOK SABHA STARRED QUESTION NO.408 FOR 03,05.2007 REGARDING ILLEGAL TRAFFICKING IN ANTIQUITIES

(a) & (b) The available data does not indicate increasing illegal trafficking in antiquities. The number of cases of antiquity thefts reported during the last three years is at Annexure.

(c) Under the Antiquities and Art Treasures Act 1972, provisions exist for regulating the trade in a`nttquities and for registering specific categories of antiquities. Government is considering the amendment of the Act to make the provisions more stringent and for providing higher punishments for violation of the Act.
India is also a signatory to the 1970 UNESCO Convention on the Means of Prohibiting and Preventing the Hlicit Trafficking in cultural property.
The provision for security at museums and protected monuments has been augmented by deploying State Police, Private Security Guards and also CISF in selected places. Strict vigil is also maintained by the Customs Department at all airports and seaports and other law enforcing agencies like the CBI, DRI and the State Police.

(d) & (e) The National Mission on Monuments and Antiquities would document the antiquities and prepare a national database, which would help in establishing provenance in the retrieval of smuggled antiquities. The Mission would also promote public awareness, concern and participation in safeguarding of antiquarian wealth.